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Amhara MP5

[For the religious functions of the dabtara in the Ethiopian church, see category 793.]

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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304 the effect of their whiteness. She also tatoos the women's necks up to the cheek, in the shape of concentric necklaces, to make the neck appear longer, a mark of beauty.

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302 The hairdresser, "ras säri" is a woman who operates a traditional beauty parlor. She braids the women's hair front to back in as few as 12 or as many as 32 braids, depending on how much the customer is willing to pay. Her best-paying customers are divorcees looking for husbands, especially during the marriage season that follows the major harvest early in the dry season. A full two-hour job with a maximum of fine braids costs ETH$1.00 (US$0.40), while a simple job producing only few and thick braids, costs only a quarter of that. Many peasant women, and women unwilling to go to this expenditure, usually let their hair grow to a huge bushy crop, halo-like surrounding the skull, occasionally anointing it with butter boiled with "ades" leaves. But divorcees have the expensive hairdo done over as often as once every two months, and have it thoroughly washed during the process, so that their hair is much cleaner than that of married women.

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535 Another occupation of women is that of "azmari", musician-singer-dancer, who performs at more elaborate, wealthier, rural weddings, and nearly all urban ones. This will be described under entertainment. She is often accompanied by a male azmari, who plays the single-string violin or the banjo-type instrument, and who may alternate with her in singing rhymes, but who does not dance.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

782 726 521 535 left, while boasts are shouted rythmically. Personal boasts are interspersed with shouts of loyalty to the emperor ("Addis Ababa! Addis Ababa!"), or recalling past loyal bravery in the service of a provincial chieftain. Fukkara is performed also before the military games of "ganna" on Christmas, and outside the church on Epiphany (Ṭemqät), to express the readiness of the young warriors to defend the faith, and on weddings to boast of warrior ancestors and so impress the in-laws.

[533] The song and dance is also referred to as "dankira " (stomping); to distinguish it from the tamer entertainment song, "ṭafan" performed by female "azmari" who perform accompanied by a violin ("masenqo") or banjo ("qrar"), often recounting tales of renown in ballad form. The "fukkara" in military life takes place before the "joy tent" ("das") of the king, before the "denkwan" (from diwan, round cotton or hair tent) of feudal lords on the march; or, in honor of a successful "killer" ("gedday") of a lion, rhinoceros, elephant or human enemy, in presence of the trophy.

[727] The dance after the victorious battle is called "koto". It is a simple jumping up and down, brandishing spear, rifle or stick vertically, reminiscent of the Central and West African dancing to exhaustion. It is accompanied by refrains, shouted frequently in response to impromptu poetry made up to celebrate the event, such as "yebanalal jebo" (the hyena will swallow him, i.e. the slain enemy). This refrain is also used before the battle, to defy the enemy and pretend that victory

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

778 Geez). Here the bread and wine used in the eucharist are
346 prepared and stored with great secrecy. The utensils of
251 the nearby cooking hut, the baking pan "metad" and large clay jars for barley beer, are also stored here. Supplies of tyeff, barley, wheat, beans, peas, may also be stored.

779 In recent years, church parades feature prominant-
186 ly the flag of the nation, the red-green-yellow of the central government, emphasizing in modern ways the close union of church and state that has long been traditional in Abyssinia.

(e) Worship and Devotional Poetry.

533 The musical chants and notations studies formally
796 have already been outlined in connection with church education.

Church hymns, including devotional poetry, are called "qene" in a generic rather than specifically accurate sense. A collection of them is contained in the book "zubae qana", and they are sung in a special mode. The chief mode is called "selt". It has three variations:

(1) "geez" - short tones, dedicated to the "Father";

(2) "ezel" - mournful tones in minor key, dedicated to the "Son" 's passion;

(3) "araray" - long, drawn-out tones, dedicated to the "Holy Ghost".

These variations are interlaced, for special results, and for specific occasions. The mass, "qeddase" (lit. [illegible]) is chanted in a mode bearing the

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

533 796 same name. "Saatat", the midnight chant, has a special mode. "Dawit", the Psalms of David, are chanted in their characteristic mode, as is the "Addis Kidan" (New Testament).

On other occasions, not only does the musical composer have the opportunity to improvise, but the lyrical poetry, "qeñe", can be varied. In rural districts, priests who can only recite Geez but not compose in it, because they don't understand it, even compose "qeñe" in Amharic. For example:

[539] "How are you, earth? How are you, world?
Even though I love you (my home soil), I wish not to come.
Even if I hated you--how shall I stay away?"

This poem, chanted as part of a church service, is not strictly liturgical, varies from district to district, and can express a wide variety of philosophical emotions, including the weltschmerz motive illustrated here. The peasants appreciate this unofficial, Amharic addition to Geez liturgy, and often mutter under their breath "Aiyye! what good words!".

(f) Heretical Movements.

795 Like any old church, the Abyssinian Coptic church has had heretical movements within it, but none of them have ever been able to split the church into sharply divided sects. Instead, heretical sects seem to follow

563 281 rest not on any supposed supernatural powers of their craft, but on theoccupation which requires them to deal with carcasses regularly, and places them in a class with the "Woyto" hippopotamus hunters of Lake Tana. However, the tanned skins produced by these "Faqi" tanners, prepared through a primitve version of making "morocco" leather, ismuch appreciated as "best workmanship" by the rural as well as town Amhara.

Like the Falasha, the "Faqi" live in hamlets of their own, usually within half a day's waling distance of a big market. They are regarded by Amhara as pagans; they gather under large trees in remote areas for their nature worship on several occasions each year. In very recent years, the urgings from the emperor and the example of Protestant missionaries have stimulated the [97] Coptic clergy to admit them to Christianity, but, as in the case of converted Falasha, the social stigma remains attached to the convert, even if he changes his occupation. Socially he is then worse off than before, for as an outcast from his own group he feels the barbs of social discrimination more than ever. In the past, the "Faqi", like the "Falasha" did not concern themselves much about this stigma, but now the "Faqi" insist on the polite address "arabeñña" --which refers to the tanner workmandhip (lit. the one who creates Arab-like, i.e. imported luxury, articles.).

[463] Occupations that can be readily learned by anyone, or that require talent rather than skill, do not connote ● 533 low class. A musician, "azmari", male or female, who may or may not play an instrument for accompaniment, is

[533] usually a Coptic Amhara, of more talent than skill.
286 The weaver, "shamani", though usually a Ethiopian Muslim (or Falasha), carries on his work in theopen, and anyone may learn it. It is only because it requires consistent manual labor that most Amhara shun it.

d) Religious Minority.

794 The foremost religious minority in Amhara provinces is that of the Ethiopian Muslims. Most of them live in towns, and in the past were residentially segregated to the older parts of town, near caravan trails andbig markets. Even today, their social associations are almost exclusively with other Muslims, e.g. traders from the Sudan. Both are regarded as low-class not only by the Amhara but also by the handful of Arab wholesale traders from Yemen. As a result, negroid and semi-negroid ex-
[797] slaves (Shanqalla), especially women, often become converted to Islam in order to marry Ethiopian Muslims or Sudanese, who, as retail traders, are economically better off. The Muslim veneer of these women is very thin, and they are among the most ardent followers of the "Zar" cult.

e) Racial Minority

563 Shanqalla slaves were, [redacted], entirely below
567 the social scale, and treated as a separate caste. They were brought or purchased from the Shanqalla, negroid, peo[illegible] on the southwest escarpment, or from Nilotic

535 shoulders and hisses along ("tekäsha wärrädä"). This dance, therefore is often used to warm up an audience before the next performer begins the "zäffän" chant, the high-pitched wailing song of the women.

533 The "zäffän" chant is accompanied by less frenzied shoulder movements, the head raised forward, and the singer chanting "up" at the sky, not forward toward the audience. This gradually changes the performance from the sensual to the spiritual. There are several variations of "zäffän":

"zäffän awärrädä" - loud, strident, high-pitched chant, mostly performed by women in public entertainment, in which the audience soon participates as chorus; accompanied by shoulder dance.

"zäffän engorgorra" - softly hummed chant, expressing philosophical sadness. Frequent at portions of the funeral chants and at ecclesiastical chanting of poetry ("genyé") performed by male dabtara.

Professional entertainment singers may be recognized "azmari" hired e.g. for weddings, when they also play such musical instruments as the "masenco" (single-string violin) and "krar" (banjo). Or they may be wandering minstrels ("hanina").

The "qena" sung in church by the "däbtära" choristers are rhymes that follow pattern and content of the psalms. Young dabtara compete with each other both as composers and as performers, for their careers depend on the critiques of the old connoisseurs. Little boys begin to chant the syllabic alphabet, as soon as they go to church school, and this pedagogic recitation is called "meleket" or "zäzema melekt" (Geez "malekta"), which may originate from the word for "gospel", or the word for "trumpet" ("mälkat"). Chants taken from the church are sung by children in a similar manner as Western Christmas carols; "säba segäl" (three wise men), "Buhe bälu" (let all say buhe), etc.

533 To European ears the music of the Amhara sounds like a continuous cacophony, like the tuning up of a Western orchestra. But once accommodated to it, the sentiments expressed in the high-pitched chanting, the ecstatic pitch of emotions of the priests and däbtära, is recognized, when they sing for hours the chants they know so well by heart.

One foreign musicologist characterizes the timbre of voice in some Abyssinian chants as "harsh, forced and strident, unlike the singing in Negro Africa which is usually soft and rounded" (footnote 96). But he appreciates the artistry by which boy singers change the register, dropping from the usual falsetto to chest voice, and octave below, then move back into the falsetto; also, the interesting polyphonic technique, in which the second voice sings the melody introduced by the first voice, in the same pitch, but with delayed entry, so that a "canon" or "round" results, which is abandoned toward the end, the two voices ending in unison. Thirds seem to be preferred, though fourths and fifths occur among the voices.

Dabtara are always at work experimenting with minor alterations, which may in time accumulate. Furthermore, certain regional specializations exist: Arabic music affects Abyssinian music wherever Muslims live in sizeable numbers, especially in Tigre province, and near the Sudanese border. Here the wailing Arabic chant that breaks off abruptly, has infiltrated.

533 178 Modern, national Ethiopian music dates only to the 1920's. It includes the modern national anthem and other patriotic songs such as "Lion of Judah". The music, often composed on order, by foreigners or

Footnote 96 - George Herzog, quoted by Leslau: Chansons Harari. Rassegna di Studi Etiopici VI, p. 161, Rome 1947.

533 resident Armenians, ranges from vague "oriental" melodies to European
178 melodies of the marching variety. But secular songs, grassroots folk-songs, are increasing with the use of public loudspeakers and growing up of a somewhat more modern educated generation singing love songs with less restraint than in the past, such as "yänne shega, yänne qonjo" (my peach, my beauty).

534 Musical instruments are largely divided into two categories in the mind of the Amhara; those used for the church service, notably percussion instruments; and those used for entertainment, notably string instruments, and wind instruments. Drums are used in both categories, however.

The reason percussion instruments predominate in church, is that musical instruments used in church have the role of marking time, in the chant-dances. Moreover, there is no independent instrumental music in the Abyssinian tradition, not even in organized entertainment.

Percussion instruments include the following:

Drum - "nägarit", the huge, barrel-like symmetrical drum over which skins are stretched at both ends, made to accompany rythmic (church) dances. It has a wooden body, 3' to 5' in length. It is considered the aristocratic drum, for in the past it was beaten to assemble the population for war or to hear a royal proclamation. (The modern government publication printing decrees is appropriately called "Nagarit Gazetta"). In the past it was carried on muleback in military expeditions, and preceded the entry of a governor into a province. Since it is heavy, it is suspended from a shoulder strap and carried by the younger men. It is beaten by the flat fingers and half the palm, while the drummer keeps time by swaying his upper body.

524 and rock back and forth. This is largely a projection of human
831 activities, in their minds, for they have all seen actual sexual intercourse among domestic animals.

The puzzle of human sexual activities is reflected in boys' riddles:

Question: "On a precipice, two large gourds hang down, What are they?"

Reply: "Woman's breasts."

Question: "A little goatskin bottle, with mouth and fur.(What is it?)"

Reply: "Vulva ("ens").

Question: "In a porridge of sorghum, a potato expands?"

Reply: "Vulva and penis."

Question: "Hardwood that does not break, skin bottle that is not worn out?"

Reply: "Penis and vulva."

524 Since toys are almost never made for children, they must rely on
533 older children for any that they cannot make themselves, e.g. slingshots.

537 The aforementioned flute, "washint", is made by boys age 11 to 12, of a hollow light bamboo into which four holes are bored. The flute is blown into from the right corner of the mouth. The following sounds are distinguished:

a) to keep the cows calmly grazing: extended high-pitched sound (dadada dididi).

b) to keep away the leopard: lower-pitched sounds. (A variation is believed useful to attract the leopard to lure him into a covered pit, onto which the flute is then thrown).

c) to accompany the azmari singer, e.g. at a wedding: high-pitched sound in somewhat minor key, as in wooing chants, to suggest emotion.

d) to accompany the "hotu" jump-dance, eg. on holy days as Temqat: a hacked, staccato sound is produced (dada dodo dada).

794 796 778 from Aksum (just as Menelik I is regarded by the Coptic Abyssinians to have brought it to Aksum from Solomon's Holy of Holies at the temple in Jerusalem). But the tabot of the zars also symbolized the outdoor tree stump which serves the invisible zar spirits as a table. Thus, partaking of refreshments from the coffee trays constituted a kind of communion with the zar spirit to whom the tray was dedicated, although this was done only during intermissions of the cult services. On one tablet, the "araqi" supplied by the foreigner stood ready.

794 796 782 In the corners, more types of incense were burning than before. In addition to "etan" (frankincense), the domestic Ethiopian "bukbuka" was sending up clouds of perfumed smoke. Leaves of "wogart", believed pleasing to the zar that causes headaches and neuralgic pains, were occasionally placed on the clay incense burners. From time to time, some imported pebbles of yellow sulphur ("kabrē" or "din") sent up acrid smoke. But the sweet odor of most types of incense predominated most of the time.

794 796 756 781 533 About 8:30, the drummer brought his heavy drum down from beneath the solidly built roof, and began to drum slowly, rythmically, still subdued. The curtain was lowered, but the shadow of Lady Salamtew behind it could still be vaguely seen. Suddenly raucous grunts began to be heard from behind the curtain, emanating from Woyzärö Sälämtew. This meant that her first major zar had arrived, and was beginning to descend into her, performing the magical coitus. Her joyshouts became louder, higher-pitched, turning to shrieks, quicker and quicker. She was beginning to perform the "gurri" victory dance of the zar who had conquered her.

Immediately the women devotees began to handclap rythmically, gradually quickening their tempo, in time to the twisting and turning

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

X 794 She then proceeded to greet the individual zar doctors and devotees
756 as if she had been absent a long time. Each rose and bowed deeply to
796 her. Barley beer was now passed around freely, while coffee beans were being roasted and crushed, in preparation for the next intermission.

X 794 Refreshed and heartened, the male zar doctor serving as poet now
782 began to chant the hymns he had composed in honor of "aweliya" the
796 [533] chief male zar of Lady Salamtew. The rythm was as formal as the hymns chanted by the dabtara in the Coptic Abyssinian church, but contained Arabic loanwords borrowed from the traders' vernacular. The audience quickly learned the response and accompanied the responsive chant with rythmic handclapping:

Poet: "Salaam" (lit. "Peace", greeting; similar in Geez and Arabic languages).

Crowd: "Salaam Alekum" (lit."Peace be with you", in Arabic).

Poet (continuing in Amharic): "Enter, warrior; enter warrior! "

Crowd: (repeats the same words).

Poet: "Lord Aweliya, what have I given to him (polite address) that he may be merciful to me?"

Crowd: (repeats same chant in more wailing pitch).

Poet: "Flower (synonym for youth), oh zar, flower!"

Crowd: (repeats)

Poet: He is Lord of Sera, Lord of Mora is he". (Polite address).

Crowd: (repeats).

Poet: "He, bridegroom Zar! Bridegroom Zar!"

Crowd: "Bridegroom Zar! Bridegroom Zar!"

Poet: "Like a lion, like a leopard, when he roars!"

Crowd: (repeats).

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

They say the prayers by heart and
without light, except in the lamps or chandeliers, for they have not got lamps. They burn butter in these chandeliers, for they have not got oil. They pray or chaunt very loud, without art of singing, and they do not recite (alternate) verses, but all sing straight on. Their prayers are psalms, and on feast days besides psalms they recite prose, according as the feast is so is the prose. They always stand in the churches; at matins they only say one single lesson: this is said by a priest or a friar, rather shouted than intoned, and he reads this lesson before the principal entrance. When this lesson is finished, on Saturdays, Sundays, and feast days, they make a procession with four or five crosses on their poles, and a cross not so much raised as carried like a stick in the left hand, because they carry a thurible in the right hand, since as many as carry a cross carry a thurible, there are always as many thuribles as crosses. They wear some silk cloaks, not well made, because they are not wider than the width of a piece of damask, or other silk from top to bottom. Before the breast, a cross piece to the flanks on each side, of any other stuff and of any colour, even though it should not match the principal part, and of this principal part a good ell hangs behind dragging on the ground. They make this procession through the circuit, which is like a cloister. This being ended, on the said Saturdays, Sundays, and feasts, he who has to say mass enters with two others into the chancel; they bring out an effigy of Our Lady, which they have in ancient pictures in all churches and monasteries. He who has to say mass places himself in the centre of the transept with his face towards the principal entrance, and the image in his hands held before his breast: and those who stand by his sides hold lighted candles in their hands, and all the others commence a chaunt like prose, and all walk, shouting and leaping as if dancing[1] they hold hands and go round, before the

[1] *Como em chacota*, dancing and singing, *i.e.*, not reverentially.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

411 181 standing at the long church services. Above all it is a weapon of offense and defense, and every Amhara male is supposed to be skilled in its use. When the *dulā* is so employed in Manz, the *bānnā* blanket is usually wrapped around the left arm to form a quick shield, the *dulā* raised high with the right to bring down on the adversary's cranium. The blows are sometimes fatal. The Manzēs are proud of their facility with the lethal stick, and nearly every district in Manz boasts that it is real "*dulā* country."

726 533 181 The Manzēs also excel at *shillalā*, the Abyssinian war chant. This is a form of boastful verse—partly intoned, partly shouted—which is declaimed by warriors to "heat their blood" before hitting the warpath. Children in Manz start practicing *shillalā* almost as soon as they leave the breast. The following [539] is a good specimen of Manz *shillalā:*

Agarātchn Māmā agarātchn Lālo wanzātchn Dangazē;
Mān abātu yāzzāl imbi senīl gizē.

Our land is Māmā, our land is Lālo, our stream the Dangazē;
What father will order us when *imbi* we say!

Imbi is an interjection used by children to express "No!" There is a double pun in this couplet. *Mān abātu* ("Who is the father?") is a profane idiom meaning "bastard." "To say *imbi*" is another idiom, meaning "to refuse." The second line may thus be also rendered as:

What bastard dare shove us around when we tell him to keep off our lands!

181 865 152 [577] The Manzē code asks that a man be ready to defend his land and church by force. It does not approve wanton aggression. But the Manzē's disposition is notoriously aggressive, for his emotional life is relatively devoid of warmth and, on the other hand, fighting is so highly rewarded. Children are urged to be adept with the *dulā*. Their temper tantrums are welcomed as signs that they are brave. As a result the men of Manz are often overcome by the impulse toward physical aggression; assault and murder are recurrent events on their fields and trails and at their marketplaces. The discrepancy between the *norm* of physical bravery, which is operative *in certain specified circumstances*, and the *general character trait* of aggressiveness comprises a major theme in their emotional life: they feel obliged to look for justification for the aggressive actions which they have been conditioned to want to carry out. This disposition is illustrated in the words of the Manzē youth who said:

I want very much to kill somebody. The only problem is I'm not strong enough. Perhaps one day I will be. Why is it all right to kill? People kill sheep, don't they? And sheep are innocent, they don't know anything, don't do any wrong. But man knows, he knows much, and still he does wrong: every man is bad. I wouldn't kill everybody, only the bad ones. If I had an enemy, I would kill him. Maybe I will become a soldier, and kill my country's enemies.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in such numbers that "Manzē" virtually became a synonym for "underground patriot."

After the liberation, as after the routing of Ahmad Grāñ's forces, the Manzē once again returned to redeem a ravished land. Slowly, the houses were rebuilt, the land was plowed once more. Churches which had been rebuilt after Grāñ's destruction only to be razed by the Italians were again put into place. Tough in his spiritual as in his physical life, the Manzē doggedly re-established the culture of his own. Now as before the occupation, a man of Manz sits on the throne, promising to let no foreigner take his country's land,* while the young braves celebrate the royal line in their festive boasting:

Ya-Manz ababā, ya-Manz ababā! Yābbabāl genā!
The flower of Manz, the flower of Manz! It will bloom yet again!

The Legacy of Manz and Gondar

Thus far the significance of Manz and Gondar has been discussed from the point of view of an outsider. We have attempted to assess, on the basis of the best available evidence, the respective historical and cultural roles of these two noted Amhara regions. We turn now to a different though related question, namely, the significance of these two places in the minds and feelings of Ethiopians themselves.

Two kinds of reaction are conspicuous. To the Ethiopian Modernist, Manz and Gondar are seen primarily as outlying pockets of conservatism. Their commitments to the past move them to resist certain changes promoted by the national government, with Manz protesting modern education and Gondar defending itself against nationalist centralization. They are regarded as backward areas, representative of the many forces that are "holding Ethiopia back," and to a certain extent are disdained.

To their inhabitants, on the other hand, these places are objects of intense loyalty. For differences of identity among the Amhara are defined chiefly in terms of their *agar*, or "home country." The size of one's *agar* is relative; it depends on the context in which the symbol is used, and may be as small as a district or as large as a province. Whatever the referent, one's *agar* signifies more than a place of residence or provenience. It means "home," and all those whose families live there are regarded with special affection, while those out-

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* On certain festive occasions the following antiphonal chant is declaimed in praise of "Ṭaqel" (the affectionate, "horse" name of Haile Selassie):

[Leader:] *Mīn āla ṭaqel mīn āla?*
[Chorus:] *Agarē la-saw agarē la-saw alsaṭem ala!*
[Leader:] What did Ṭaqel say, what did he say?
[Chorus:] "My country to outsiders, my country to outsiders, I will not give!" said he.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Poetry stands as the most appreciated of all traditional forms of expression, and nearly two-thirds of the secondary and half the college students state that they compose Amharic verse themselves, on occasions ranging from public celebrations to private moments of great joy or sorrow. This is as might be expected in view of the tremendous importance of poetry in traditional Amhara culture (see chapters vi and vii). Painting, on the other hand, has played a rather inconspicuous part in Abyssinia. (Its genuine achievement in the high culture, the often remarkable Ethiopian miniatures, is frequently repudiated by modernizing Ethiopians for being too "backward.") Those students who do prefer Ethiopian-style paintings explain their preference on the grounds that they find them more intelligible and closer to Ethiopian life, and stress their value as reminders of Ethiopia's past.[26] The majority who prefer European-style paintings offer primarily mechanical reasons; they find them more "efficient," "systematic," and "accurate"—more "up-to-date."

In response to a question on their favorite type of foreign music, the students gave a wide variety of answers, ranging from "Oriental" and "religious" to "Rose, Rose, I Love You" and "Mozart." By far the most frequently mentioned musical preference was "classical" (20 per cent). This was followed by approximately equal percentages of preference for American popular songs; jazz and swing; rock 'n' roll; and Sudanese music. Of foreign dances, the most popular are the waltz and the tango (17 per cent each), followed at some distance by rock 'n roll, cha cha cha, and jitterbug. In their movie preferences, finally, historical (17 per cent) and educational (12 per cent) films are the favorites, followed by war, detective, and adventure films.

One other area of consumption should be discussed in this context: the use of cigarettes. To the tradition-minded Amhara smoking symbolizes all that is objectionable in Western culture, while to some of the modern adolescents it symbolizes the excitement and "life" of modernity. The number of these latter is not really very high, at least not among those still in school; but it is noteworthy that emphatic rejection of smoking by most of the students is based primarily on the rationalistic arguments that it is injurious to health and wastes money, rather than on the traditional argument that it is sinful and counter to Christian custom. The most violent reactions of any, however, were aroused by the question: "How do you feel about women smoking?" In the secondary school sample to which this question was posed, disapproval was practically unanimous, and the comments included "makes me ashamed," "it is scaring," "I could choke her to death," and "worse than hell itself."

A few minor differences in taste appear in connection with differences in sex and school attended. The female students in our secondary school sample show a greater partiality to native foods than do the males, and, on the other hand, greater interest in Western music and dance. Peculiarities in the sub-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cultures of different schools account for a few other minor variations. Thus, for example, preference for Scottish dance is expressed chiefly among students of a school run by a British staff; the only kind of foreign music preferred by students of the Theological School is Sudanese music, that is, the kind most similar to Ethiopian music; and the University College, most urbane of the Ethiopian schools, is the only one where a majority of respondents indicated that they enjoy smoking.

Of all the differences, the most conspicuous is that between the secondary

TABLE 10

AESTHETIC PREFERENCES OF STUDENTS

Area of Consumption	Percentage of Students Who			Number
	Prefer "Traditional" or "Ethiopian" Forms	Prefer "European" or "Foreign" Forms	Indicate No Preference	
Dress for women	85	15	0	(700)
Food	80	16	4	(700)
Cigarettes*	71	10	19	(700)
Dress on holidays	70	26	4	(700)
Poetry	67	26	7	(700)
Music	62	35	3	(700)
Manner of eating†	40	58	2	(700)
Dance	38	56	6	(700)
Drink	24	56	20	(700)
Painting	23	67	10	(700)

* "Like to smoke" versus "do not like to smoke."

† Combines responses on "*gursha*" and eating in common or at individual places, which were practically icentical.

school students and the college students. For in each of the areas discussed above in which traditional or Ethiopian patterns were set alongside European or foreign patterns, *the move from the secondary level to college level was accompanied by a decrease in preference for traditional patterns.*

If now we overlook these differences and calculate the total response, we obtain the profile shown in Table 10, which provides some idea of the range of variation in the students' taste with regard to items from Ethiopian and foreign cultures.

Morals.—The moral values reinforced during traditional Amhara adolescence are by no means rejected during modern Ethiopian adolescence, but their significance is somewhat attenuated due to the new conditions of life in

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live near the same master, they divide up the neighboring countryside to avoid duplication in their begging.

The ordained clergy are themselves given to begging, for items ranging from contributions to the local church to petty personal effects. High-ranking visitors to their locale are customarily made the objects of such solicitations. Another type of begging is practiced by the minstrels who wander about the country with their one-stringed fiddles and fecund wit, coaxing contributions from any audience they can capture. In addition to these there are numerous professional beggars—the maimed, the diseased, and the poverty-stricken—who attach themselves to a well-attended church or monastery if they are unable to travel. The *lālibalā* is a notable type within this category of mendicants.[23]

In addition to honoring the periodic appeals of beggars, "big men" are supposed to provide yearly feasts (*gĭber*) at which beggars of all the above descriptions are fed. In all these instances, the solicitation and bestowal of charity contributes a solidaristic element to the network of personal relations among the Amhara.

The foregoing analysis of forms of interaction among the Amhara has been undertaken in order to gain material for generalizing about a psychological disposition. Our unspoken, tautological assumption has been that the ways in which individuals typically relate to social objects (i.e., other persons and collectivities) represent the sociologically relevant aspects of their psychology. Egoism and solidarism have been used here as concepts for depicting one dimension of "social character," using this term in the specific sense of comprising those aspects of personality which are both socially shared and constitutive of those actions that are oriented to social objects. We may now attempt to summarize the preceding discussion with the following definition of Amhara social character as it relates to the concept of individualism: The Amhara is primarily disposed to structure interaction in terms of self-assertion, dissension, and distrust, and to be indifferent to the concept of civil community. At the same time this egoistic orientation is blended with a warm and kindly sense of sociability, an occasional mood of generosity, and a refined sensibility regarding differences in status and the readiness to pay deference accordingly.

INDEPENDENCE VERSUS CONSTRAINT

In the previous section we considered the nature of the individual's orientation toward others and toward collectivities in Amhara society. Our question now is the converse: what order of demands is made upon individuals by the institutions of that society? Specifically, we shall be concerned primarily with the degree to which the norms which govern institutional roles are

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Synchronization and Privacy

*121 181 571 The degree of independence that exists in Amhara society may be further assessed by focusing on certain abstract properties of its organization as well as on the concrete institutions just discussed. In this context two variables are particularly relevant. One, degree of synchronization, concerns the extent to which the behavior of the individuals in group activities is strictly controlled and co-ordinated. The other concerns the extent to which the individual may be free from the intrusion of others when he desires privacy.

Except in the area of protocol and etiquette at the royal court, synchronization is conspicuously lax among the Amhara. Ample scope is left for individual whim and impulse in nearly every area of concerted activity. Groups of people going on a trip, for example, make little attempt to start at the same time or to keep abreast of each other. Carefully co-ordinated teamwork is [476] scarcely known in manual labor. Military units proceed, not in squads and [704] platoons, but as masses of individuals.

*121 181 571 • 533 535 The lack of synchronization in singing and dancing is perhaps the most striking case of all, for in these activities the participating individuals are supposed to be performing in unison. Yet the choirs of *dabtarā* sing with little regard for the standard line; each chorister sings as the spirit moves him, and the resulting cacophony is punctuated from time to time as some voice stands out by intoning a phrase with new energy a few beats before or after the majority of his fellows. A similar phenomenon occurs in dance, where what apparently is intended to be a symmetry of motion appears rather as a cohort of individual movements.* The impression left by such performances is that the Amhara accord a high degree of independence to the individual whenever he does take part in collective enterprises.

*121 181 571 [591] [576] The Amhara likewise maintain a high degree of respect for individual privacy, despite the hierarchical character of their society. This is shown, first, in the expectation that each nuclear family should inhabit its separate dwelling. The individual home is regarded with great respect; no one, not even a relative, presumes to enter another's home without being properly acknowledged and escorted inside. When possible, private quarters are isolated from those where guests are entertained. The ideal Amhara household, [592] found among the well-to-do, contains separate buildings for private quarters [342] (*ĭlfĭñ*) and for the hall where company is received and entertained (*addārāsh*).

* At times, it may be noted, when more complex ceremonies permit a plurality of musical and choreographic themes to be going on simultaneously, despite the lack of synchronization the over-all aesthetic effect is often quite impressive. Such is the case, for example, in the ceremonial procession on Tĭmqat day described in chap. iii.

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in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by throwing stones.

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimulate the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose.

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The instruction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for personal development.

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their performance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except for some intricately structured āccelerandos in certain religious hymns, consists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar.

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique ornamentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again individuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qenē*—will be discussed below.

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*121 538 156 [726] sinuate insults through the ambiguities of his compliments, as was illustrated above. *Shĭllalā,* declaimed to arouse male courage before battle, is also heard at weddings and other festive occasions. Another type of exclamatory verse (*ho-berē*) is sung by the peasant at harvest time as he drives his cattle around the threshing floor. Verse of sorrow (*engurguro*) is intoned at time of bereavement or during moments of loneliness. Finally, in the conviviality of a drink-house enlivened by a minstrel, alone at work, or with a group of friends on various occasions, the Amhara finds that verse provides a medium for thoughts on almost any subject—people, places, animals, weather, love, work, and death. The following poem illustrates an important quality found in many of these verses, pessimism and irony, especially common in verses about love.

[539] Fish on the cliff, baboons in the sea;
The ass after honey, while hay draws the bee;
On a baking-pan of wax, butter to see;
Or a monk from Zegamel monastery
In the pagan land of Metcha to bury;
With an unsuited person in love to be;
Thus has it ended, my affair with thee.
Leave it, forget it, just let it rest—
A hapless ass at a hyena's breast.

[533] [534] These various sorts of verse may be either sung or spoken. The auditory effect is often enhanced by the accompaniment of musical instruments. When serious *qenē* has been recited by its author in church, it is usually repeated by a chorus of *dabtarā* singing to the slow beat of drums and sistrums. The sad strains of *engurgo* are sometimes accompanied by the mellow ten-stringed lyre, while an instrumental background for livelier subjects may be provided by the Abyssinian banjo or one-stringed violin.

Throughout these varieties of verse forms, certain conventions are followed. Most important, the lines are supposed to rhyme; that is, end with the same consonant-plus-vowel. Inferior poets achieve this rhyme at the expense of the words they use. In addition, proper rhythm must be maintained; the lines must not "break." This means that the flow of the line must be smooth and that the metrical pattern in one line—based on the number of accents, not syllables[84]—should be paralleled by the others. A poet who breaks his lines is satirized by being dubbed a "lion."

While observing these rules—and, in the case of *qenē,* the much more complicated rules pertaining to stanza forms and poetic figures—the Amhara poet *must also be original.* In the production of verse, individuality is explicitly emphasized. Poets who use verses composed by others—this is primarily true of students of *qenē*—are insulted with the term *lēbā* ("thief"). Similarly, a poet should not repeat himself. If he repeats the same word